

# A Year of Covid

#AYearofCovid

## – *Understanding the Impact on the Domestic Abuse Frontline*

Over the last 12 months, frontline domestic abuse professionals have met unprecedented challenges with extraordinary resilience & fortitude.

We are delighted to be joined by:

15.00  
**SafeLives Welcome**  
CEO, Suzanne Jacob

15.15  
**Practitioner Survey Findings**  
SafeLives Researchers Martha Tomlinson,  
Emma Retter & Nicola Stokes

15.25  
**Survivor Voice**  
SafeLives Pioneer & Survivor Rachel Williams

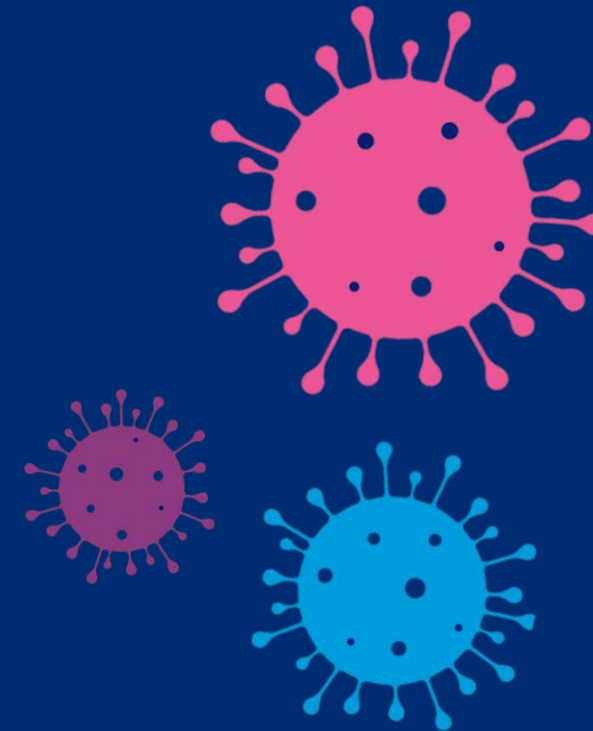
15.35  
**Impact of Covid19 on Honour Based Abuse**  
Karma Nirvana Executive Director, Natasha Rattu

15.45  
**Aurora New Dawn**  
CEO, Shonagh Dillon

15.55  
**Support & Wellbeing Groups**  
SafeLives Head of Practice Janine Roderick &  
Rock Pool CEO Sue Penna

16.05  
**Domestic Abuse Commissioner**  
Nicole Jacobs

16.15  
**Q&A**  
Chair: Jo Silver



# A Year of Covid

(March 2020 - March 2021)

## Coronavirus Bill

19 March 2020

SafeLives issues briefing for MPs, warning of an increase in domestic abuse as thousands of victims may have to isolate with perpetrators and flags areas of the Coronavirus Bill which may have unintended negative impacts on domestic abuse victims.

## Reach In

30 April 2020

SafeLives launches 'Reach In' campaign encouraging people to act if they're concerned someone they know is experiencing domestic abuse during lockdown.

It's hard to reach out for help from behind closed doors. We need someone outside to



## Training moves online

SafeLives mobilises to take its training online. Since developing remote training programmes we are reaching a wider cohort across the UK than ever before.

We have also continued delivery of our 'Domestic Abuse Matters' cultural change programme for police forces.



In the last six months of 2020, over **1,600 people** participated in our specialised training and we delivered our **Domestic Abuse Matters** programme to more than **2,000 police officers**.

## Ask for ANI

April 2020

SafeLives' Pioneer survivors put forward the idea of a code word to be used in the few shops allowed to be open – pharmacies. With support from the DA Commissioner and Victim's Commissioner, we proposed a scheme to the Home Office and worked with them to create 'Ask for ANI'

## Joint VAWG sector statement on emergency Govt funding

April 2020

Sector welcomes £750m fund to support frontline charities during the pandemic, but calls on the government to act quickly to support frontline VAWG services, with a ring-fenced fund that is simple, flexible, & fair, including support for specialist services for marginalised groups.

## Hidden Harms Summit

21 May 2020

SafeLives makes the case for a long-term sustainable funding settlement for the domestic abuse sector and calls for more Idvas who provide a vital lifeline to victims and survivors.



## Funders lean in

Summer 2020

NatWest donates £1m for the Circle Fund to support victims of economic and domestic abuse, in partnership with SafeLives and local services.

Vodafone launches the Great British Tech Appeal with Barnardo's, British Red Cross and SafeLives. More than 570 mobiles and tablets have been provided to survivors and their families.

Trusts and foundations offer emergency support.

## Domestic abuse victims recognised in daily Coronavirus press conference

May 2020

SafeLives consistently applies pressure on Government to change public messaging to remind people lockdown restrictions don't apply if you are not safe at home. The exemption is highlighted in a 10 Downing Street Coronavirus press conference and Prime Minister repeats this again in his 3rd lockdown announcement in January 2021.



## The Domestic Abuse Strategic Learning Partnership

October 2020

AAFDA, Chayn, Galop, Imkaan, Respect, Rights of Women, SafeLives, Social Finance, Standing Together, Surviving Economic Abuse and Women's Aid come together to form a strategic learning partnership - taking a long-term view of the sector's needs both during and beyond Covid-19. Supported by the National Lottery Community Fund.



## Support & Wellbeing sessions for the frontline

January - March 2021

With additional funding from the Home Office, SafeLives, in partnership with Rock Pool, develop support and wellbeing sessions for frontline domestic and sexual abuse practitioners in England and Wales. The objective is to increase resilience and morale at a time of immense pressure, enabling services to remain available and sustainable for clients.



respondents agreed the session will have a positive impact on morale

## Rolling services & survivor surveys



August 2020

SafeLives publishes new data gathered from both survivors and services that show demand for services continues to increase.

61% of survivors not able to reach out for support during lockdown.

38% of services reported increases in caseloads.

86% cited tech and IT challenges.

## Ask for ANI launched

January 2021

By April 2021, more than 5000 pharmacies including Boots and Superdrug are participating in the #AskforANI codeword scheme, enabling victims of domestic abuse to contact specialist DA services for support and advice. Currently, the scheme is being used once every 30 hours.



## Government announces £40m fund for rape & domestic abuse victims

February 2021

SafeLives plays a key role in unlocking new Government funding for specialist services for victims of rape and domestic abuse, including a crucial £27m 2-year fund for Idvas and Isvas as a result of our joint campaigning in the sector.



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# **Survey of domestic abuse practitioners in England and Wales 2020/21**

# Methodology

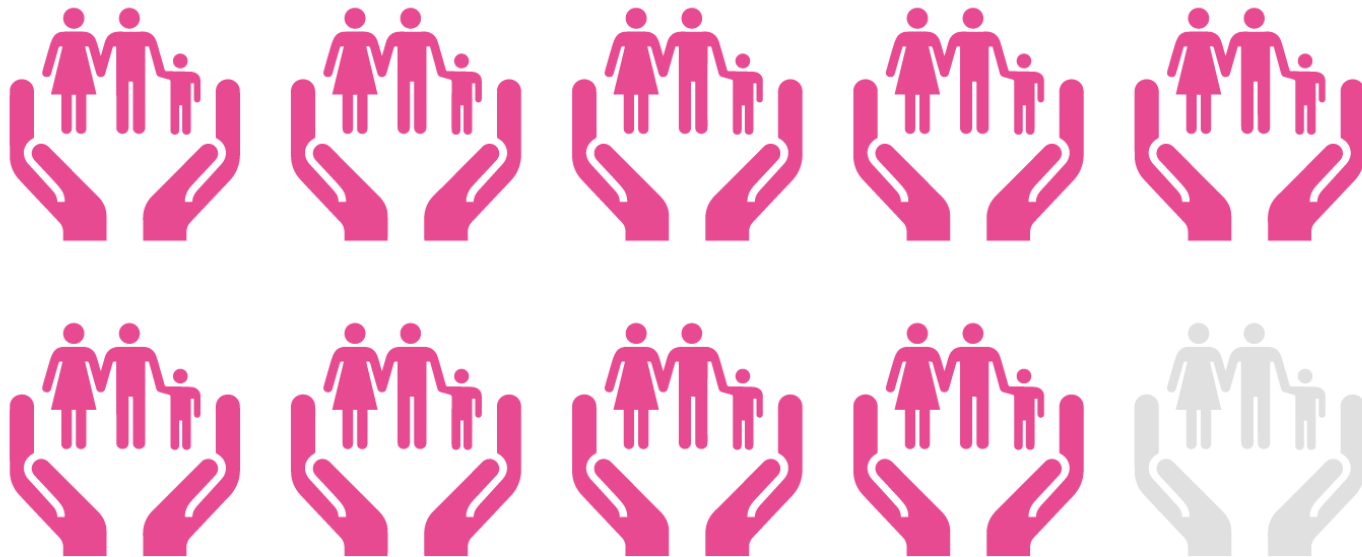
- The survey ran between November 2020 and January 2021
- We received responses from 153 services who employ frontline domestic abuse workers
- The qualitative analysis in this report is drawn from information about 153 services who employed Idva, outreach, Ypva, refuges, Isva, IRIS, Helplines or group programmes
- The Idva analysis in this report is drawn from information from 188 services



# Findings



**Almost nine in ten services** had  
**seen an increase in demand since  
the pandemic began**



**Practitioner Survey**

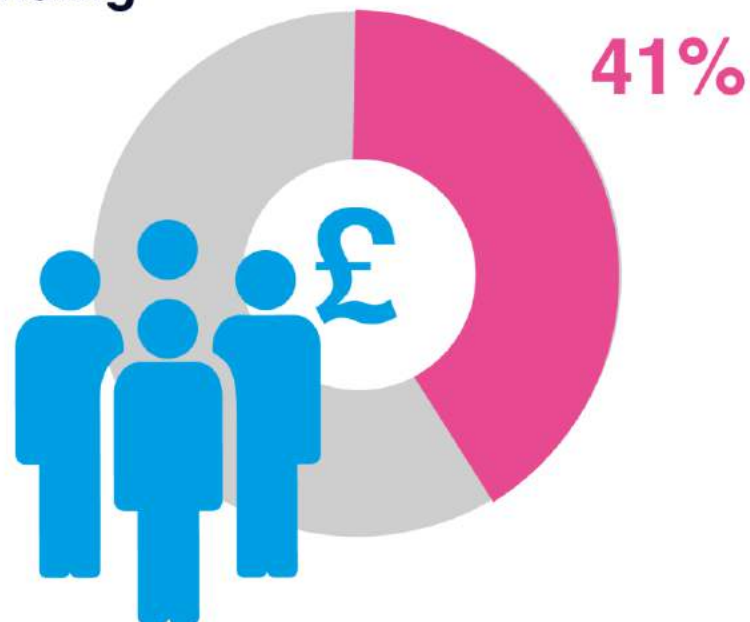


# Service concerns during Covid-19



**Almost half of all services (46%)** biggest concern at this time was the safety of clients and their children.

**Two fifths of all responses** gave their biggest concern as staff capacity, staff recruitment and funding



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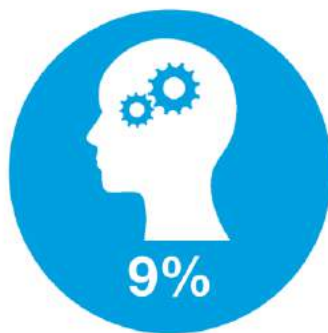
# Service concerns during Covid-19

A quarter of respondents (27%) felt the biggest concern was



**the delay and unavailability of other services.** For example, housing, substance misuse, mental health and courts.

**Almost one fifth of responses (17%) voiced concern about the effect the pandemic was having on staff members in relation to stress and staff burn out**



**One in ten (9%) of practitioners** were worried about the mental health of their clients.

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# Idva provision in 2020/21



There has been a **31% increase in the number of cases heard at Marac** in 2020 compared to 2016.

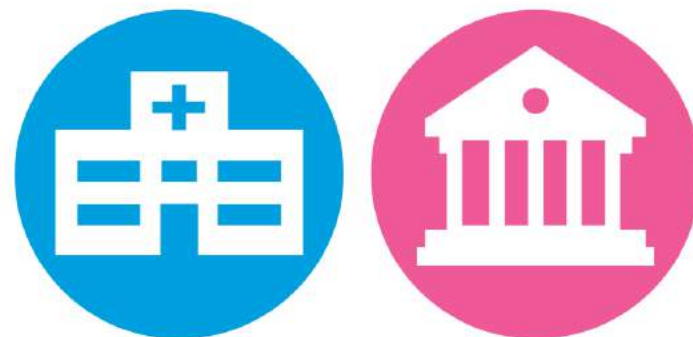
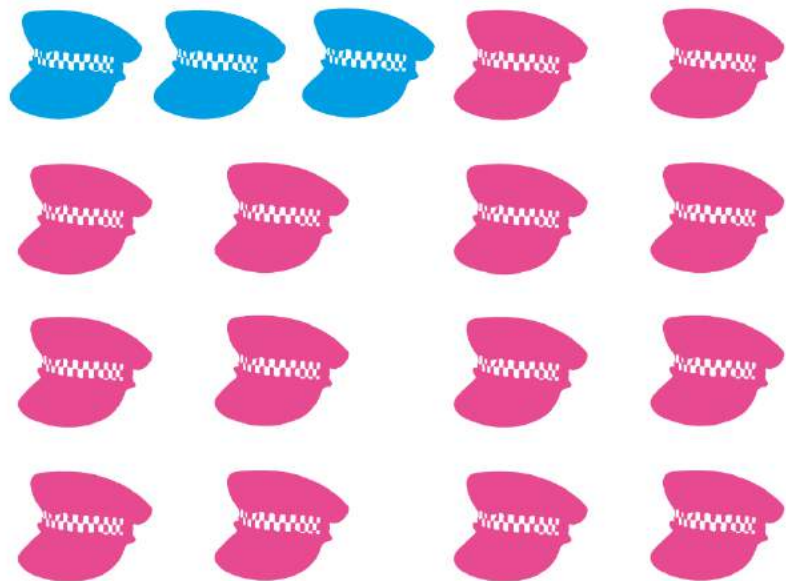
There is only **66% of the required number of FTE Idvas** in England and Wales to meet the needs of victims at the highest risk of serious harm or murder



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# Idva provision in 2020/21

Only three police force areas have the minimum required number of Idvas, while 14 have less than 50%

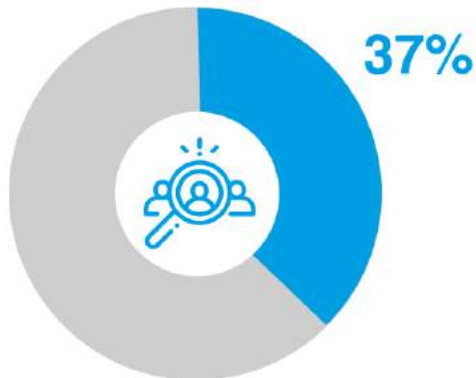


Just **one in ten** services had an Idva who was based in a health setting, and only **one in twenty** had an Idva providing specialised court support.

# Funding and resources



**Over a third of respondents** stated that recruiting and retaining staff was difficult when funding was not consistent and based on short term contracts



Two fifths of services who responded to our survey felt that they were **unable to keep up with demand.**



**One quarter of respondents (25%)** noted the time it takes to look and apply for funding.

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# Recommendations

## For Government



A 3 year settlement for domestic abuse services which support the whole family



An annual ring-fenced fund of £56m is required for Idva provision with a further £350m needed to fund outreach workers



Government funding rounds should be integrated in one package of support for all domestic abuse services, with long-term commitment



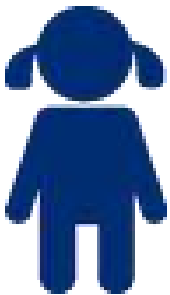
# For Government



A commitment to shorter mental health service waiting times for victims of trauma



Continue the current campaigning “You’re not alone” and “Ask for ANI.” Provide funding to raise awareness of domestic abuse to friends, family and neighbours to “Reach-In” and to perpetrators of harm reminding them there is “#NoExcuseForAbuse”



Ensure there is a focus on children impacted by DA and that everyone working with CYP understand the impact of domestic abuse on children and how to refer to specialist support

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# For Local Commissioners



Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnerships should ensure that commissioning cycles are three to five years



Co-produce services with survivors locally. Measure improvements and identify gaps with robust local datasets



Culture Change training for multi-agency professionals working with families affected by domestic abuse



Commission health-based Idvas in acute and mental health settings, as well as IRISi in primary care settings

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# The voice from the frontline

**“Keeping up with the demand relating to referrals of all levels of risk, the continuous waiting lists for other agency support, lack of multi-agency working, funding cuts, payment by result contracts and staff's health and wellbeing.”**

Practitioner response



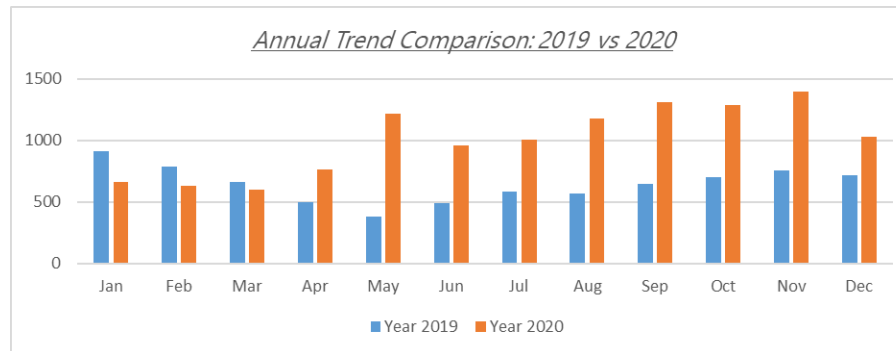
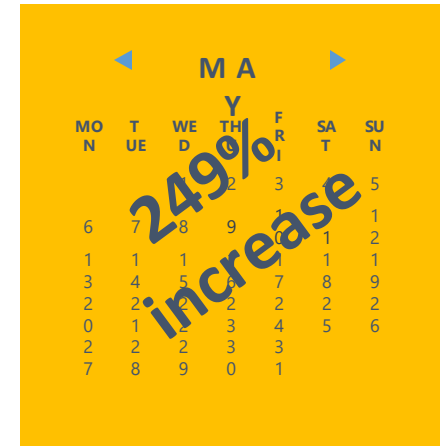
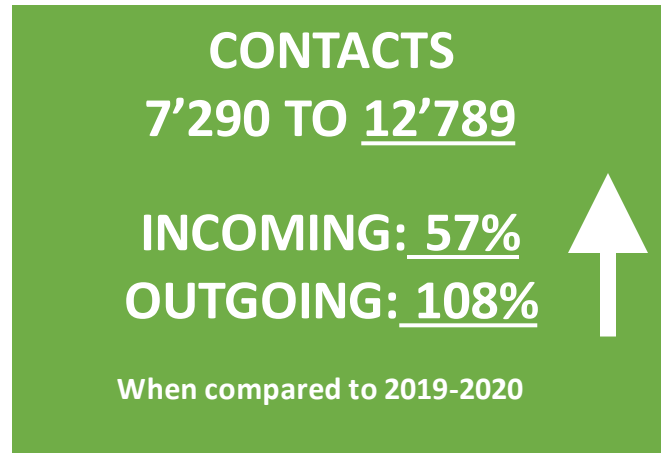
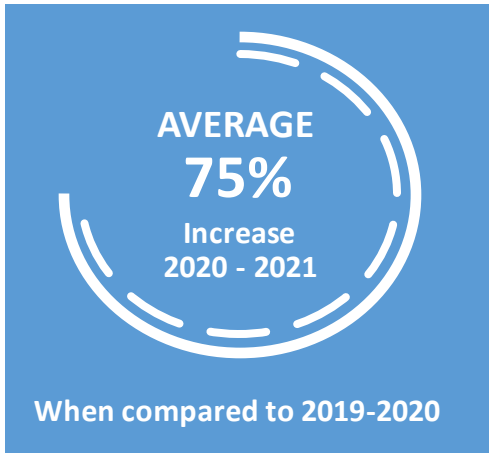
# KARMA NIRVANA

Supporting victims of honour-based abuse  
and forced marriage

## Impact of COVID – 19 On Honour Based Abuse



## DASHBOARD SLIDE



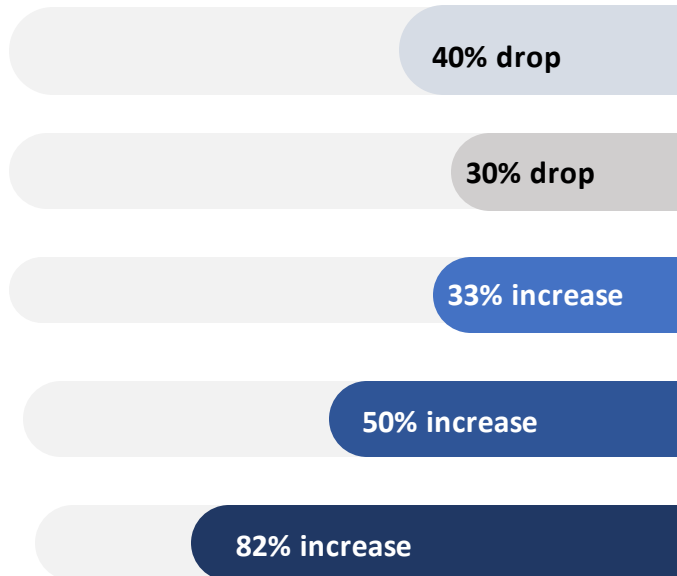


# TREND COMPARISON

TOP LINES

## % drop/increase

Below are some notable trends for 2020-21, compared to 2019-20.



THREAT OF FORCED MARRIAGE

REFERRALS FROM SCHOOLS

THIRD PARTY AND FAMILY REFERRALS

REPORTING MENTAL ILL - HEALTH – high common concern

PROVISION OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

## CHALLENGES

- INCREASED DEMAND
- LIMITED TRANSITION TO PLAN WORKING FROM HOME
- STAFF SICKNESS DUE TO COVID – SMALLER TEAM
- STAFF MEMBERS ALSO HOMESCHOOLING
- STAFF WELFARE – INCREASED DEMAND, WORKING FROM HOME

## NEXT STEPS:

- SUSTAINABLE FUNDING TO REFLECT NEW AND CONTINUING DEMAND
- PREPARING FROM WHATS TO COME – ‘PROACTIVE vs REACTIVE’
- REPRESENTATION – INEQUALITY GAPS ARE WIDENING



# Support and Wellbeing for the Domestic Abuse Frontline During Covid 19

**Janine Roderick - SafeLives**

**Sue Penna - Rockpool**

# ‘Putting Our Shoulder to the Wheel’

- Securing Funding and Resource
- Bringing in Expertise
- Setting up Governance
- Setting up a booking system
- Navigating issues and being timely with offer



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# SafeLives Support and Wellbeing Offer to Frontline Practitioners During the Pandemic



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# Who Took up the Offer?

- 57 support & wellbeing groups
- 325 people attended the groups
- Attendees came from 121 different organisations

## Organisation Breakdown

Type of organisation	No. of organisations
DA	80
Council	12
Housing	10
B&F	5
Health	5
SV	4
Police	3
CYP	2

# A Virtual Spa .....



## **What to Expect:**

- A safe space for you to pause and reflect on your wellbeing
- An opportunity to share how issues arising impact on you
- A space to look at techniques and strategies to improve your wellbeing and resilience

## **What not to Expect:**

- Supervision
- Case management
- Therapy
- A space to unpick practice or policy

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# Impact of COVID-19 on individuals and communities

We are all likely to have become aware of the concept of trauma so have increased awareness

May be hard to tell at the moment what that impact might be on the individuals and communities we support, as it will depend on their pre-existing trauma experience

There is anecdotal evidence reporting that those with previous trauma are actually handling this better than those without, as they have had years of being resilient in adversity

Our communities will have adapted and coped in a myriad of ways that we might find hard to understand at first



# Developing resilience

Resilience – our bounce back often reflects our previous circumstances, never assume those with the most disadvantage have the least resilience – in fact they may have more

However some of that resilience may result in unhelpful coping strategies – (alcohol, drugs, over eating)

Resilience doesn't happen in isolation and it is not something we develop without good relationships with others

It can help us bounce back from adversity but not all situations enable us to be resilient

Balance between being able to feel and express distress and buffer our coping with resilience skills



# Developing resilience

Identify strengths

Maintain a daily routine

Make connections

Keep things in perspective

Move towards goals

Self-regulate

Self-care and maintaining boundaries

Take any opportunities for self-discovery

Take a break

Make mistakes and take risks

Maintain a helpful outlook



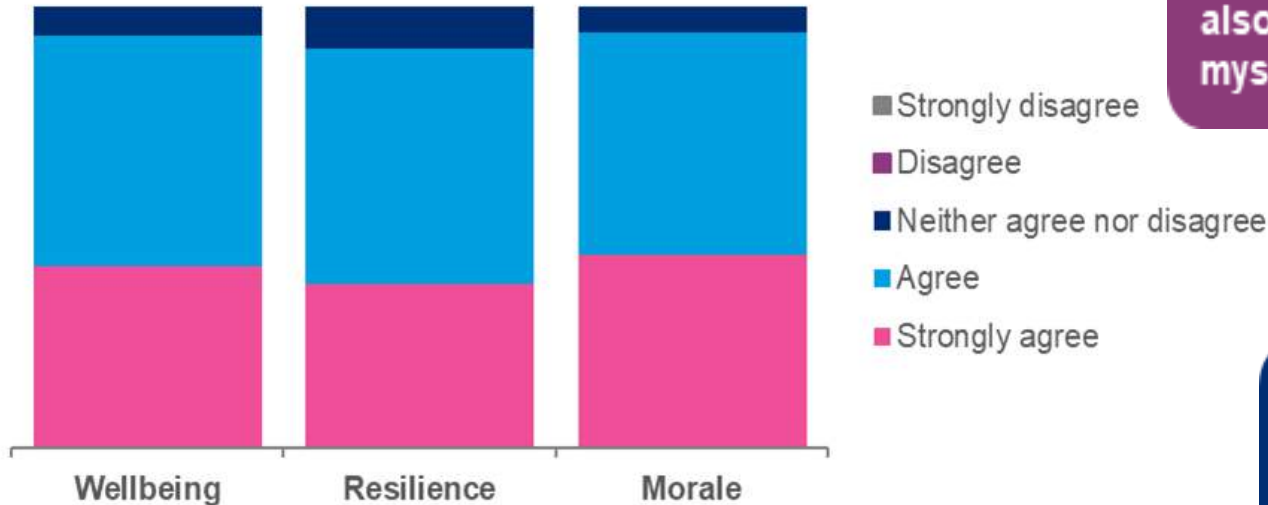


# Resilience Bingo

Accepted a social zoom invite	Did something you enjoy and are good at	Phoned an old friend	Ate regular meals	Praised others for good work	Practiced a relaxation technique
Thanked those that love you		Practiced a hobby	Meditated	Tried a new activity	Had a beauty treatments
Focused on what you are good at	Spent time thinking about what has gone well	Tried a new recipe	Took time to indulge yourself	Set yourself a challenge	Got back in touch with old friends
Took lunch breaks	Prayed	Introduced self to neighbours	Suggested a meet with someone new	Got up the same time on weekdays	
Been outdoors for activity	Took up volunteering		Have plans for the future		Limited the alarming news you watched or listened to
Tried a new hobby		Took exercise		Accepted what you can change and what you can't	

# Impact Highlights

Do you think the session will have a positive impact?



“ Feeling that what I am experiencing I am not alone, also to learn that I can do things for myself and not feel guilty.

“ I feel a lot more positive, and think this should be available to more service staff.

“ I really enjoyed the group interaction. I like to hear other people's experiences across the country that can be similar or different to mine as a DA practitioner. It helps me feel less alone and more like my experience is normal.



Respondents agreed that the session will have a positive impact on their morale

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# What's Next?

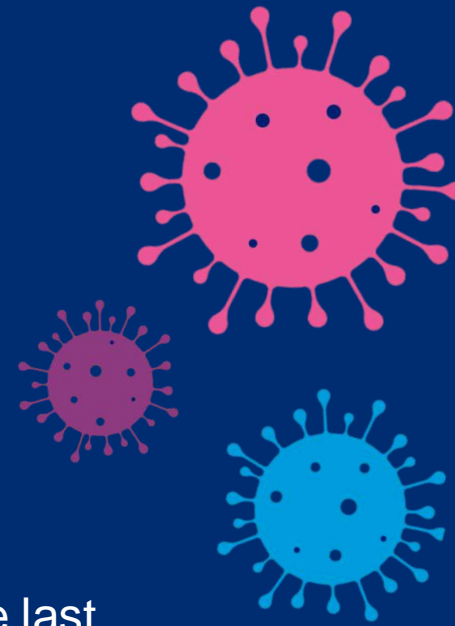
- Reflect on workforce support and value of coming together
- Explore how we can sustain a tiered approach



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# A Year of Covid

## *– Understanding the Impact on the Domestic Abuse Frontline*



**Thank you** for reflecting with us on the challenges faced over the last 12 months and how we can better prepare for the future as a sector.

You can find the event recording, feedback form and other materials here:

<https://safelives.org.uk/a-year-of-covid-event>

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